

Governor's Office of Disability Affairs

Developmental Disabilities Council Report

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs has gone through an interesting yet efficient adjustment in the last one hundred days. We lost several staff members due to different circumstances, but still have managed to keep a great group of hard working individuals together. As of December 19th, we only have three staff members left at GODA: Joey Cooper (Assistant Director) Leaa Teichman (SILC Administrative Assistant) and Brandon Burris. Due to the hiring freeze that Governor Jindal recently placed on all State Departments we do not know when the positions will be filled.

On December 10th GODA hosted the 2008 Governor Outstanding Leadership in Disability Awards. The award ceremony took place at the Old State Capitol and was attended by over 280 guests. We had several state dignitaries in attendance and presented nine total awards to very worthy individuals. This year GODA was able to double the amount of nominations from last year. The audience was welcomed by a video from the First Lady. The Developmental Disabilities Council Inclusive Art Contest winner's art work was on display at the ceremony's reception.

Governor Jindal appointed Donna Breaux as the new Chair of The Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs. We are very excited to finally have the Council organized and heading in the right direction. GACDA has new chairs for each of its committees and they are as follows:

- ADA Committee – Steve Kauffman
- Legislative Committee – Rep. Scott Simon
- Strategic Planning – Carol Lirette
- Education/Awareness Task Force – Laura Brackin

Our next GACDA meeting will take place on January 6th 2009 at the Louisiana State Museum. One of the key focuses of the council will be to promote new legislation that will require schools to teach disability education and awareness in conjunction with Disability Awareness month.

GODA has continued to increase exposure of the office and our new staff. We have almost completed our Families Helping Families "World Tour." We have visited all but one of the FHF offices. We have been actively visiting Mayor's Advisory Committees across the state, and had the opportunity to attend several awards ceremonies and University programs.

GODA has finally begun to supervise the state's contract with Louisiana Guardianship. Currently LA Guardianship is serving 106 to 110 constituents a month. They employ six curators that assist the constituents across the state. The contract is jointly funded by OCDD and OAAS. We are actively working with OCDD to increase the total number of constituents served. The total maximum number of constituents that can possibly be severed under the contract is 125 a month.